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# GAUL METADATA

The Global Administrative Unit Layers (GAUL 2015)

## *Abstract*

The Global Administrative Unit Layers (GAUL) is an initiative implemented by FAO within the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and AfricaFertilizer.org projects.

The GAUL compiles and disseminates the best available information on administrative units for all the countries in the world, providing a contribution to the standardization of the spatial dataset representing administrative units. The GAUL always maintains global layers with a unified coding system at country, first (e.g. departments) and second administrative levels (e.g. districts). Where data is available, it provides layers on a country by country basis down to third, fourth and lower levels. The overall methodology consists in a) collecting the best available data from most reliable sources, b) establishing validation periods of the geographic features (when possible), c) adding selected data to the global layer based on the last country boundaries map provided by the UN Cartographic Unit (UNCS), d) generating codes using GAUL Coding System and e) distribute data to the users (see [TechnicalaspectsGAUL2015.pdf](#)).

Because GAUL works at global level, unsettled territories are reported. The approach of GAUL is to deal with these areas in such a way to preserve national integrity for all disputing countries (see [TechnicalaspectsGAUL2015.pdf](#) and [G2015\\_DisputedAreas.dbf](#)).

GAUL is released once a year and the target beneficiary of GAUL data is the UN community and other authorized international and national partners. Data might not be officially validated by authoritative national sources and cannot be distributed to the general public. A disclaimer should always accompany any use of GAUL data.

5 territories have been updated respect to the previous release. Moreover, the coastline of American countries or other special areas have been updated using Open Street Map (see [ReleaseNoteGAUL2015.pdf](#)).

GAUL keeps track of administrative units that has been changed, added or dismissed in the past for political causes. Changes implemented in different years are recorded in GAUL on different layers. For this reason the GAUL product is not a single layer but a group of layers, named "GAUL Set" (see [ReleaseNoteGAUL2015.pdf](#)).

GAUL 2015 is the eighth release of the GAUL Set, which now includes the following files:

- **G2015\_2014:** these file refer the global layer to year 2014.
- **G2015\_2013:** these file refer the global layer to year 2013.
- **G2015\_2012:** these file refer the global layer to year 2012.
- **G2015\_2011:** these file refer the global layer to year 2011.
- **G2015\_2010:** these file refer the global layer to year 2010.
- **G2015\_2009:** these file refer the global layer to year 2009.
- **G2015\_2008:** these file refer the global layer to year 2008.
- **G2015\_2007:** these file refer the global layer to year 2007.
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- **G2015\_1992:** these file refer the global layer to year 1992.
- **G2015\_1991:** these file refer the global layer to year 1991.
- **G2015\_1990:** these file refer the global layer to year 1990.

The GAUL project does not implement changes dated before 1990.